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ABSTRACT

France's employment policy has historically been governed by a strategy of interventions aimed at specific categories of individuals, including victims of industrial restructuring, entry workers, the long-term unemployed, and the disabled. Since the 1980s, France has had the following main lines of employment policy: (1) assistance to victims of corporate restructuring; (2) intervention in the labor market; and (3) a "promotion of employment" policy. These policy lines reflect very different conceptions of relations between intervention in different groups and intervention in territories. To serve the needs of different groups and local labor markets, multiple actors have had to be mobilized at the regional, departmental, and local levels. However, two decades have clearly not sufficed to overcome these multiple actors' different professional cultures and institutional patterns and produce a genuine synergy among them. The French Ministry of Employment's central administration maintains a complex relationship with the local and regional territories, and any attempt to analyze this relationship necessitates distinguishing between "territorialized policy" (implementation of national policy in a given region or local territory) and "territorial policy" (elaboration and implementation of policy by local actors). A study conducted in 2001 shows that the territorial dimension has begun to assume a larger role, in both conception and implementation of employment policy. (MN)

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EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND TERRITORIES

In the face of mass unemployment, employment policy over the past twenty years has evolved towards individualised action aimed at taking into account the diverse situations not only of the unemployed but also of local labour markets. To these ends, multiple actors have had to be mobilised at regional, departmental and local levels. Two decades have clearly not sufficed to produce a genuine synergy among these actors, with their varied professional cultures and different institutional patterns. A study carried out in 2001 for the Dares (Bureau for Research and Statistics at the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity) shows, however, that the territorial dimension has begun to assume a larger role, in both conception and implementation of employment policy.

France's employment policy has historically been governed by a strategy of interventions aimed at specific categories of 'publics'—the reclassification of employees who are victims of industrial restructuring, training and labour-market entry for young job-seekers, the struggle against the exclusion of the long-term unemployed from the labour force, the integration of handicapped workers and so on. This targeting of publics corresponds to the State's need to provide social measures accompanying the rise of unemployment in recent decades. As such, it has less to do with the question of the *territory*, in the sense of local development, than with that of *territorialisation*—the implementation of a national policy at local level. Indeed, the heterogeneous makeup of the unemployed and the diversity of local labour markets confronts the State with a growing need to individualise assistance to job seekers and adapt its intervention to specific local contexts. It is for this reason that public authorities have focused their efforts over the past twenty years on the local application of national policy for the struggle against unemployment, such as the devolution of measures carried out by the Ministry's services, the 'globalisation' of the management of schemes or the development of local partnerships. This 'territorialisation' approach has even been intensified over the past few years, to the point where we may now begin to speak of the local management of employment.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY, BETWEEN PUBLICS AND TERRITORIES

The preoccupation with territory and local development has never been absent from employment policy, even if the latter has historically been governed by a logic of intervention among specific publics. Thus, the policy of accompanying business restructuring, which goes back to the creation of the Fonds national de l'emploi (National Employment Fund) in 1963, is aimed at the occupational reclassification and geographical mobility of employees who are victims of economic layoffs. Similarly, the vast increase in policies of intervention in the labour market during the 1980s and 1990s was intended less to contain unemployment than to improve the position of certain categories of publics on the unemployment 'waiting line'. Since the first youth plans of the late 1970s, these policies of labour-market intervention have been termed 'specific' insofar as they are targeted at categories which have been identified in terms of difficulties encountered in acceding to qualification or employment: young people without qualifications or 'disadvantaged', the long-term unemployed, income-support recipients, handicapped workers and so on. In the early 1990s, the so-called specific policies were reoriented towards the publics which were most disadvantaged on the labour market. The same period

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saw the implementation of the policies known as 'general', in the sense that these were aimed at getting the unemployment 'waiting line' moving again and not simply reorganising it, by encouraging the creation of jobs through combined action on the cost and duration of work. The idea was "enriching the employment content of growth" in order to decrease the unemployment rate. These general policies of intervention in the labour market broke with the principle of targeting categories of beneficiaries, which differentiated them from specific policies but not from the strategy of action on publics since they were supposed to benefit job-seekers as a whole.

Alongside these two historic lines of employment policy—assistance to victims of corporate restructuring and intervention in the labour market—a third line has emerged more erratically over the past twenty years, namely the so-called 'promotion of employment' policy. During the 1980s, the Ministry of Labour reintroduced the preoccupation with local development (which had appeared in France in the 1970s) into the field of employment. In order to extend its macroeconomic intervention in the labour market through a microeconomic approach, it sought to support local initiatives for employment. The concern for local development as such was absent from the Five-Year Law of 1993 but the Employment Division undertook an internal analysis of support for local initiatives and the spread of local services which anticipated the theme of "enriching the employment content of growth" developed within the context of the general policies. The Youth Jobs programme, set up in 1997, lies at the intersection of the policies of labour-market intervention and local development. It offers a synthesis of the macroeconomic strategy of the former (it is a mass programme aimed at 'young people' in the broad sense and having as its objective access to employment) and the microeconomic strategy of support for local initiatives (it obeys a project logic, is directed at local level and is aimed at the creation of activities responding to locally defined needs).

Schematically, we may say that the three main lines of employment policy reflect very different conceptions of relations between intervention on publics and intervention on territories: the policy of accompanying company restructuring reaches the territories through the publics; conversely, the policy of promoting employment reaches the publics through the territories and, finally, the policy of intervention in the labour market is structured around the notion of publics and reaches the territories only indirectly. In reality, the first and third policies on the one hand and the second on the other bring into play two very different conceptions of the relationship to the territory and the 'local'. The first two concentrate the means of intervention of the national State on categories of publics considered high priority, in order to favour their retraining or 'employability' according to a principle of affirmative action (known as 'positive discrimination' in France). The second focuses on territories conceived as spaces for social and economic development. The first are centrally elaborated and run with a top-down logic whereby the territory is perceived as the administrative space for the implementation of national policies. In the second, the local representatives of the State accompany and support projects run by local actors, with a bottom-up logic.

THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE, A STRATEGIC DEVOLUTION

The organisation of the Public Employment Service (Service public de l'emploi, SPE) was formalised in 1984 by a circular from the Employment Division. The creation of the SPE was intended to generate synergy among the measures of the Ministry of Employment, the national employment agency (Agence nationale pour l'emploi, ANPE) and the adult vocational training organisation (Association pour la formation professionelle des adultes, AFPA) in association with the social partners and local elected officials. This goal of partnership still exists and, within the central employment administration, reinforces a global approach that relies on the sharing of responsibilities among participants in order to give meaning to the notion of SPE and more generally to the devolution of employment policy.

Beyond the organisation of the SPE, the idea of 'globalisation' emerged in 1986 from a simple observation: over the years, the schemes for fighting long-term unemployment had multiplied in a somewhat redundant way. This array of schemes complicated their implementation as well as the readability of employment policy. As a result, this policy was rationalised in 1989 by limiting the number of schemes, devolving its management on the basis of a functional redefinition of the levels of intervention and aggregating the management of their funding. This first experience remained limited, however—it involved only 10 percent of the budget lines—notably because of the reservations of the Ministry of Finance.

In 1996, after three years of hibernation, the Employment Division revived this process in order to go from a simple globalisation of funding for schemes to a real strategic territorialisation of employment policy. This entailed on the one hand the devolution of Employment Service activities through a differentiation of levels of intervention: regional direction, departmental management and local implementation. On the other hand, it meant support for the SPE's intervention and the implementation of employment policies at local level to produce local diagnoses and action plans, which are elaborated by local SPE teams.

THE WEIGHT OF PROFESSIONAL CULTURES AND INSTITUTIONAL PATTERNS

The success of the territorialisation approach largely depends on the internal dynamics of the SPE. But this structure is made up of institutions marked by different professional cultures and institutional patterns which require regular adjustments in order to achieve a coherent whole. In the first place, the territorial organisation of these institutions differs considerably. In the early 1980s, the ANPE was already structured at regional, departmental and local levels, whereas the Ministry of Employment's services were only organised at an infra-departmental level. The

ANPE's territorial architecture was redefined in 1995 with the elimination of it departmental offices in favour of delegated ones. This modification gave pre-eminence to the link between regional and local levels, thus bringing the ANPE and the AFPA closer together, since the latter was similarly structured at these three levels. The Ministry of Employment clearly involved itself at infra-departmental level, with the creation of areas for managing the individualised training credit and the intervention of the employment-training co-ordinators in these areas. But the departmental level remained the pivot in the organisation of its devolved services. These disparities in the territorial structures of the ANPE, the AFPA and the Employment Services thus made the creation of the SPE's different levels of articulation problematic, notably with regard to its local teams.

This organisational disparity was coupled with a sharp differentiation of the internal authority structure of the three institutions on which the SPE relied, a situation which directly affected the territorial implementation of employment policies. Although formally placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Employment, the ANPE seems to enjoy a relatively large degree of autonomy. Its structure, strictly vertical, links the general management to the local employment agencies (ALE) in a linear chain of authority. The devolved services of the Ministry of Employment, meanwhile, are themselves attached—in the absence of an internal chain of authority—to the two levels of regional and departmental prefectures. This territorial structuring sometimes allows for a subtle play between institutions, which varies in intensity depending on the regions and individuals concerned. At local level, moreover, the administration of the network of employment-training co-ordinators suffers from chronic instability and this situation weakens the ministry relative to the local ANPE and AFPA services, which are, by contrast, well implanted, structured and regularly reinforced. These uncertainties in the Ministry of Employment's chain of authority sometimes constitute a handicap in the relations which its devolved services maintain with local and regional elected officials, especially when there is a form of competition between administrative and elective legitimacy. The globalisation/territorialisation approach tends, however, to strengthen the legitimacy of action of the Ministry of Employment's devolved services.

In general, and despite different attempts at adjustment undertaken since 1984, the SPE still comes up against a series of obstacles tied to the territorial and organisational diversity of its components. Thus, until the most recent period of globalisation/territorialisation, it has functioned more in terms of discrete interventions within various forms of 'mutual coexistence' than through any substantial co-ordination of its services.

TERRITORIES, PUBLIC MEASURES AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The Ministry of Employment's central administration maintains a complex relationship with the local and regional territories and any attempt to analyse it calls for a review of the distinction between 'territorialised policy ' and 'territorial policy'. The first term refers to the implementation of a national policy in a given regional or local territory while the second concerns a policy elaborated and carried out by local actors.

In practice, we can observe three different patterns:
- The involvement of local elected officials is limited and the public intervention occurs essentially at the initiative of the SPE, which functions as both the guarantor of correct implementation of employment policy and the main actor in this process;
- The involvement of local elected officials is strong and the local communities or their 'satellites' implement a local policy in the absence of any substantial co-ordination or articulation with the SPE;
- All the actors intervene in the territory with strategic convergence in the areas of employment, labour-market entry and vocational training.

In the first case, we are dealing with territorialised policies. In the second, the local and national interventions are juxtaposed and at best complementary. In the final case, which remains rare, the distinction between territorial and territorialised policy applies only to funding sources.

These three patterns are not frozen, however, and they may change over time. They depend notably on the schemes, which entail greater or lesser degrees of project logic. But they also depend on the actors, the symbolic status they accord to the territory and their involvement over time. The extent to which the territories are taken into account in employment policies is thus partly determined in the field, in function of the intensity of local exchanges between actors. The situation of the labour market at a given time also seems to play a major role in the ways employment policy is implemented. Thus, in an adverse period, when the political stakes of unemployment and the State's responsibility in the area of social cohesion lead it to reaffirm its exclusive authority in the domain, the SPE tends to 're-centralise' the forms of its action. Conversely, when the labour market is more fluid, local actors seem to enjoy greater legitimacy. Taking the territories into account thus entails collective, institutional learning of new forms of public action and in this respect follows the general trend toward modernisation of the State modelled on the governance of public action.

Over the past twenty years, employment policies have been guided by the desire for a gradual shift from action determined by the supply of schemes to one based on local demand. This change is reflected in an increasingly individualised assistance to job-seekers, greater devolution of public schemes and receptiveness to local partnerships. It has led to greater attention paid to the interpretation of needs on the basis of territorial analysis. Guided by performance goals, which have gradually replaced the simple requirement of due care, this form of management has enjoyed relative success, although it sometimes comes up against the survival of a quantitative, compartmentalised management of the schemes. Now promoted at all levels of the SPE, it is spreading with the globalisation/ territorialisation approach. But it still faces several

obstacles—the uneven quality of local diagnoses and action plans from one territory to another, post-programme review of national objectives, proposals for regional programming not always satisfied by the regional distribution adopted by the central administration. One of the main difficulties appears to lie in the ability of the local SPE teams to place territory and employment in perspective, to develop shared objectives which are locally based: the quality of the diagnoses carried out, from the simple 'inventory' to the 'strategic diagnosis', varies according to the degree of involvement, the competence and the professional culture of all the actors concerned, but above all the degree of development of the SPE at local level.

TOWARDS LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT?

The territory tends to be taken into account more easily in the conception of employment policies than in their implementation. If this trend appears to be going with the 'flow' of history—which makes it difficult for the actors to change directions—it does not affect all schemes in the same way. Until 1996, those informed by a real project approach (inspired by local development methods) had never attained the critical mass which would permit them to exert a clear, lasting influence on the tone of employment policy as a whole and its forms of management.

There also seems to be a strong link between territorialisation and individualisation of assistance to job-seekers. In fact, the recognition of the territories has emerged historically with schemes aimed at the publics most remote from employment. Both on and through the territories, employment policy tends to pursue an overall objective of preserving social cohesiveness, which goes back to the very sense of the State's duty to integrate its citizens. From this standpoint, the policy seems to be largely dominated by the action of the Ministry of Employment's services and the administrations under its supervision, while outside partners are called upon within the framework of this policy. The latter tend to be more involved in a governance of public action in the area of employment when these actions target lower-priority publics or the structuring of systems of local actors. Indeed, the signs of change are to be found in this last kind of action, and the evolution of the SPE is the clearest manifestation of this phenomenon, albeit within a somewhat unstable play of employment management on local political scenes where authority and legitimacy are intertwined.

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A Study on Changes in Employment Policy

The analysis presented in this issue of *Training and Employment* draws on a study on "Power, Public Action and Territory" commissioned by the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity's Bureau for Research and Statistics (DARES) and carried out in 2001 by the CERVL in co-operation with Céreq and the Institut d'économie publique (IDEP).

The study deals with the different attempts and actions aimed at taking the territorial dimension into account in the implementation of employment policy since the beginning of the 1980s. Its main objective is the analysis of the evolution of public action in the area of employment on the basis of the classic opposition between territorial policies, elaborated and carried out by local actors, and territorialized national policies. It is based on 141 interviews conducted both at national level and in the Aquitaine, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regions. Within these three regions, field surveys were carried out in different industrial, rural and urban areas.

The team conducting this study, under the direction of Thierry Berthet, Philippe Cuntigh and Christophe Guitton, included Maïten Bel (IDEP), Fabrice Combelle (CERVL), Mathieu-Bénédict Lexton (CERVL) and Sébastien Segas (CERVL). It was accompanied by a steering committee headed by Olivier Mazl (DARES) and composed of representatives of the DARES, the General Directorate for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP) and the devolved services of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity. The complete report will be published shortly in Céreq's Document series (in French), while the DARES will publish a summary of the report along with an issue of its weekly overview *Premières synthèses*.

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